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a suspension mechanism for suspending the explosive device within said inner containment vessel; and

a rotation mechanism for rotating at least one vessel with respect to the other;

wherein engagement of said rotation mechanism causes at least one of said containment vessels to rotate from a position wherein said inner access port is aligned with said outer access port to a position wherein said inner access port has been rotated from about 90 to about 180 degrees with respect to said outer access port such that debris, blast pressure, and fireball from explosion of an explosive device within said inner vessel are safely contained or severely mitigated.

#### REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections set forth in the Office Action mailed on June 4, 2002. Claims 1-16 and 18 have been rejected. Claim 17 is objected to. Accordingly, Claims 1-18 are now pending. The drawings have been objected to.

This amendment is to expedite prosecution and should not be construed as acquiescence in any ground of rejection. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute the originally filed claims in the future. The comments in the Office Action are now addressed in turn.

#### ***Drawings***

The drawings have been objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a), as not showing every feature of the invention as specified in the claims. Applicants have amended the drawings as follows:

A block #38 showing the rotating means motorized mechanical drive system has been added. Support may be found in the specification, page 8, line 21-22, stating *a motorized mechanical drive system*.

Remote activation has been depicted by a line 36 drawn from a remote *activation* source to the motorized mechanical drive system 38. Support may be

found in the specification, page 8, line 21, stating *remote activation* of the drive system.

A block #48 showing access valves has been added. Support may be found in claim 17, stating *one or more access valves*.

Applicants respectfully request that this objection to the drawing be withdrawn.

Note that the specification has been amended to include the reference numbers ascribed to the elements now explicitly shown in FIG. 1. In addition, the specification has been amended to include the language appearing in claim 17. These amendments to the specification add no new matter.

#### ***Rejections Under 35 USC 112***

Claim 18 has been rejected under 35 USC 112, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and claim the invention. More specifically, the Examiner has expressed a concern as to whether claim 18 includes all the contents of claim 1, or is meant to depend on claim 1.

Applicants have amended the claim herein to address the Examiner's concern. Specifically, claim 18 has been amended to recite the container as presented in claim 1, without depending from claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

#### ***Rejections Under 35 USC 102***

Claims 1-7, 8-14, 16, and 18 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(a) as being anticipated by "Portable EOD Total Containment Unit," NABCO, Inc. (<http://www.nabcoinc.com/eod/html>, August 10, 2001). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants maintain that all subject matter described in the cited prior art also appears in the earlier filed provisional application, herein incorporated by reference. The filing date of the provisional application is June 28, 2001. As a result, the effective date for the claims at issue as they relate to the cited reference is prior to that of the reference.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are patentable over the cited reference.

***Rejections Under 35 USC 103***

Claim 15 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over NABCO. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As discussed above, Applicants maintain that all subject matter described in the cited prior art also appear in the earlier filed provisional application, filed on June 28, 2001.


Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 15 is patentable over the cited reference.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claim 17 has been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has added Claim 19 to incorporate the one or more access valves into independent form. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,  
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MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDED PARAGRAPHS OF THE  
SPECIFICATION

Paragraph beginning at page 8, line 19:

Preferably, the rotating means can be activated with a low amount of force. Such activation can be accomplished manually or through a motor-driven, pneumatic or hydraulic mechanism. One embodiment of the invention provides for remote activation 36 with a motorized mechanical drive system 38. Preferably, the rotating means will withstand significant dynamic and static loads within a hostile environment.

Paragraph beginning at page 10, line 6:

Other aspects of the invention provide for a sealed containment system that allows for containment of explosive products. According to this embodiment, the explosive device can be disrupted inside the sealed containment unit, and then the inner unit can be decontaminated and flushed. In some cases, the container includes one or more access valves 48, which permit sampling of post-detonation contents of the container for purposes of analysis. Samples of the interior atmosphere can be taken to determine the appropriate treatment to verify the decontamination process was successful. According to these embodiments, the unit further comprises a drain post with shut off valve; purge port for flooding the unit with decontamination material; sample post for testing internal atmosphere pre and post detonation.



MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

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18. (Amended) A method of suppressing blast effects associated with detonation of an [a] explosive device, said method comprising the steps of:

inserting said explosive device into a blast container [of Claim 1;] comprising a-d, said a-d comprising:

(a) an outer containment vessel, adapted to rest either on one end or one side, said outer vessel including an outer access port;

(b) an inner containment vessel positioned completely within said outer vessel, said inner containment vessel including an inner access port;

(c) a means for suspending the explosive device within said inner containment vessel; and

(d) a means for rotating at least one vessel with respect to the other;

engaging said rotating means;

whereby engagement of said rotating means causes at least one of said containment vessels to rotate from a position wherein said inner access port is aligned with said outer access port to a position wherein said inner access port has been rotated from about 90 to about 180 degrees with respect to said outer access port such that debris, blast pressure, and fireball from explosion of an explosive device within said inner vessel are safely contained or severely mitigated.



## APPENDIX OF PENDING CLAIMS

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A container for an explosive device comprising:

an outer containment vessel, adapted to rest either on one end or one side, said outer vessel including an outer access port;

an inner containment vessel positioned completely within said outer vessel, said inner containment vessel including an inner access port;

a means for suspending the explosive device within said inner containment vessel; and

a means for rotating at least one vessel with respect to the other;

wherein engagement of said rotating means causes at least one of said containment vessels to rotate from a position wherein said inner access port is aligned with said outer access port to a position wherein said inner access port has been rotated from about 90 to about 180 degrees with respect to said outer access port such that debris, blast pressure, and fireball from explosion of an explosive device within said inner vessel are safely contained or severely mitigated.

2. The container of Claim 1, wherein the outer surface of said inner containment vessel is contoured to the inner surface of said outer containment vessel with a small clearance therebetween.
3. The container of Claim 2, wherein a filler material is inserted into said clearance.
4. The container of Claim 3, wherein said filler material is flame retardant.
5. The container of Claim 1, wherein the outer containment vessel comprises a central portion and an end dome, wherein said end dome is removably secured to the central portion.
6. The container of Claim 1 further comprising a cover for said outer access port.

7. The container of Claim 6, wherein said cover is flame retardant.
8. The container of Claim 1, wherein said inner containment vessel further comprises a lining material.
9. The container of Claim 8, wherein said lining material is capable of supporting an explosive device toward the center of the inner vessel.
10. The container of Claim 8, wherein said lining material is flame retardant.
11. The container of Claim 1, wherein said outer containment vessel is spherical.
12. The container of Claim 1, wherein said outer containment vessel is cylindrical.
13. The container of Claim 1, wherein said rotating means comprise a lever arm attached to said inner containment vessel, whereby engagement of said lever causes said inner containment vessel to rotate from a position wherein said inner access port is aligned with said outer access port to a position wherein said inner access port has been rotated from about 90 to about 180 degrees with respect to said outer access port.
14. The container of Claim 13, wherein said rotating means is activated remotely.
15. The container of Claim 14, wherein said rotating means is a motorized mechanical drive system.
16. The container of Claim 1, further comprising a sealing means provided between said outer containment vessel and said inner containment vessel such that chemical or biological agents to be dispersed are completely contained within the unit.
17. The container of Claim 1, further comprising one or more access valves which permit sampling post-detonation contents of the container for purposes of analysis.
18. A method of suppressing blast effects associated with detonation of an explosive device, said method comprising the steps of:

inserting said explosive device into a blast container comprising a-d, said a-d comprising:

(a) an outer containment vessel, adapted to rest either on one end or one side, said outer vessel including an outer access port;

(b) an inner containment vessel positioned completely within said outer vessel, said inner containment vessel including an inner access port;

(c) a means for suspending the explosive device within said inner containment vessel;  
and

(d) a means for rotating at least one vessel with respect to the other;

engaging said rotating means;

whereby engagement of said rotating means causes at least one of said containment vessels to rotate from a position wherein said inner access port is aligned with said outer access port to a position wherein said inner access port has been rotated from about 90 to about 180 degrees with respect to said outer access port such that debris, blast pressure, and fireball from explosion of an explosive device within said inner vessel are safely contained or severely mitigated.

19. A container for an explosive device comprising;

an outer containment vessel, adapted to rest either on one end or one side, said outer vessel including an outer access port;

an inner containment vessel positioned completely within said outer vessel, said inner containment vessel including an inner access port;

one or more access valves which permit sampling post-detonation contents of the container for purposes of analysis;

a suspension mechanism for suspending the explosive device within said inner containment vessel; and

a rotation mechanism for rotating at least one vessel with respect to the other;

wherein engagement of said rotation mechanism causes at least one of said containment vessels to rotate from a position wherein said inner access port is aligned with said outer access port to a position wherein said inner access port has been rotated from about 90 to about 180 degrees with



respect to said outer access port such that debris, blast pressure, and fireball from explosion of an explosive device within said inner vessel are safely contained or severely mitigated.